CURRENT FISHERIES STATISTICS NO. 8018

Georgia Landings, ANNUAL SUMMARY 1979

In cooperation with the Georgia State Department of Natural Resources,
Game and Fish Division, Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Publication of Georgia Landings will be discontinued by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) after the monthly and annual bulletins for 1979 have been issued. Other bulletins to be discontinued include Mississippi, Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Florida, North Carolina, Maryland, Florida, Louisiana, Alabama, Virginia, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Texas. The NMFS data collection program for commercial fisheries in the States mentioned will in no way be affected by this change.

Publication of Shrimp Landings, Gulf Coast Shrimp Data, Frozen Fishery Products, Fish Meal and Oil, and other statistical publications on commercial fisheries will be continued.

October 6, 1980

Washington, D.C. 20235
202-634-7366

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE / National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration / National Marine Fisheries Service

C. F. S. NO. 8018

FISHERIES OF GEORGIA, 1979

Commercial landings of finfish and shellfish at Georgia ports during 1979 were 21.9 million pounds, valued at $27.7 million, a 25-percent increase in volume and a 90-percent increase in value over the previous year. Increases in volume and value were due primarily to the largest landings of shrimp since 1960. Hard blue crabs and shrimp totaled 96 percent of the commercial catch. Of the total value, shrimp had 91 percent and hard blue crabs 7 percent. Combined landings of finfish, oysters, and scallops accounted for 2 percent of the value. Georgia firms processed and packaged 25.3 million pounds of finfish and shellfish products valued at $70 million in 1979. Shrimp products were the leader with 14 million pounds value at $50.5 million. Other leading products were fish sticks, fish portions, and picked crabmeat.

SHRIMP. Shrimp landings of 9.7 million pounds (heads-on) increased 71 percent, compared to 1978, and 33 percent when compared to the 7.3 million-pound average for the years 1965-78. The increased landings are attributed to several factors: a mild winter enabled shrimpers to have a good spring catch, excellent catches of rock shrimp were taken in the lull between the summer brown and fall white shrimp seasons, and excellent catches were taken during the fall white shrimp season.

The 1979 commercial catch composition by species as compared to 1978 is as follows:

	1978	1979
	----------Percent----------	
White	77	82
Brown	22	12
Rock	1	6
Pink	1	1

Georgia's 1979 shrimp catch was valued at a record $25.1 million. The overall dockside value of a pound of heads-on white or brown shrimp averaged $2.72 per pound, rock shrimp averagd 60 cents per pounds.

In 1976 and prior years the coastal sounds were open to shrimp trawling between September and December to harvest the fall crop of white shrimp. Since the 1977 season Georgia's sounds have remained closed to power-drawn commercial fishing. As a result the shrimp catch by count size, all of which are taken on the offshore waters, has shifted to the larger size shrimp. Listed below are the heads-off count size distributions for white shrimp taken between September and December for 1976-79:

	1976	1977	1978	1978
	----------Percent----------			
15/20	1	4	4	1
21/25	3	42	53	21
26/30	17	30	26	27
31/40	28	20	12	31
41/50	20	3	3	14
51/67	21	1	2	7
68/up	11	1	1	1

The spring catch was the best in several years: about 1.0 million (heads-on) pounds of mostly 21/25 heads-off counts were landed. During this period some good catches were taken off the Savannah and Brunswick areas. The summer season for brown shrimp along the beaches opened on June 19th with mostly poor catches. Brown shrimp catches picked up slightly in July, but dried up by mid-August. Most shrimpers were disappointed in the brown shrimp season, because they landed only 1.16 million (heads-on) pounds. Landings of 622,000 pounds of rock shrimp was by far a record for Georgia fishermen; however, only a small percentage of the shrimping fleet participated in the large catches taken in July and August. Rock shrimp is not generally considered a major fishery in Georgia, because of its low dockside value and difficulty in marketing. Also, the rock shrimp grounds are not usually fished unless catches of white or brown shrimp decline until they are no longer profitable.

In early September Hurricane David traveled up and across the Georgia coast and moved in around Savannah. The storm dropped about 8 to 10 inches of rain, which drained into the sounds. The incoming fresh water forced most of the white shrimp from the sounds onto the offshore shrimping grounds, where shrimpers reported excellent catches. The large catches continued through September, October, and part of November before dropping off. The hurricane caused little damage to the fishing industry other than some shortages of ice and power outages, which were limited mostly to the Savannah area. The total fall catch of white shrimp was about 7.0 million pounds.

Dockside prices for heads-off shrimp peaked out in May and June at $5.30 for 26/30's and $4.50 for 31/35's from a low of $3.85 for 26/30's and $3.35 for 31/35's during January. Fall prices of white shrimp generally ranged from $4.35 to $4.75 for 26/30's and $3.80 to $4.20 for 31/35's, which were the predominant sizes landed.

Diesel fuel supplies were adequate in 1979, despite fears of shortages during the peak producing months of the shrimp season. Price increases during the year brought the December price to almost double January's price of 49 cents per gallon. When the prices began rising in March, fishermen became more determined than ever to experiment and modify their trawling rigs to cut fuel consumption and maintain the catch rate at profitable levels.

HARD BLUE CRABS. Landings of hard blue crabs during 1979 were 11.3 million pounds valued at $2.0 million, a 7-percent increase in volume and a 6-percent increase in value. From 1965 to 1978 Georgia crabbers have averaged 8.0 million pounds per year. Dockside prices for 1979 average 17 1/2 cents per pound compared to 18 cents in 1978 and 21 cents in 1977.

Georgia's crab industry is seasonal. Most of the crabs are landed during the summer, when most of them are sent to the local picking plants. In good years the catch often is more than the plants can process; at this time, as in June and July, plants cut back their purchases from crabbers to alleviate the overload. In the early spring, before the peak producing months, most of the large crabs are sent to the Maryland market where prices generally are much higher than in the local area. In 1979 Georgia's spring catch of 3.2 million pounds was very good compared to 2.2 million for the previous spring.

FINFISH. Finfish landings during 1979 were 812,000 pounds, compared to 1.1 million for 1978. Landings of croaker, flounder, and shad increased. There were decreases in the landings of grouper, king mackerel, porgy, sea bass, snappers, and especially king whiting which decreased about 110,000 pounds. Most of the shrimpers, who catch whiting and flounder incidental to shrimping, said, "The whiting were not as plentiful this year." Georgia's shad season officially opens in January; however, the bulk of the catch is not taken until around March and early April. In April, when some of the more northern States open their season, the Georgia shad fishermen usually switch to other fisheries as the dockside prices plummet. Catches of up to 1,000 pounds of croaker per day were taken by shrimpers off the Savannah area for about 2 weeks after Hurricane David passes through the area. Croaker are generally found in the Georgia coastal area; however, the incidental catch is usually negligible. Decreased landings of reef fish such as grouper and snapper were a result of less activity and fewer vessels working out of Georgia ports.

OYSTER AND SCALLOP. Landings of oysters declined in 1979, compared to 1978. Beds of scallops, which change locations each year, were found off St. Marys in early 1979; however, landings of scallop meats were 33,000 pounds, compared to 87,000 pounds for 1978. Scallops, which generally are not found off Georgia every year, are taken by off-season shrimp vessels using scallop trawls during the late winter.

Oyster landings declined to a low of 11,400 pounds of meats in 1979. Georgia's oyster industry has steadily declined over the last 70 years from a high of 8 million pounds of meats in 1908.

BY TED FLOWERS
Fishery Reporting Specialist
National Marine Fisheries Services
Post Office Bldg. (P.O. Box 8143)
Savannah, Georgia 31402
912-232-4321

GEORGIA LANDINGS BY DISTRICTS, 1979

SPECIES	DISTRICT					
	NORTHERN		CENTRAL		SOUTHERN	
FISH	POUNDS	DOLLARS	POUNDS	DOLLARS	POUNDS	DOLLARS
BLUEFISH	-	-	-	-	175	68
CABIO	105	43	-	-	63	16
CARP	780	144	-	-	-	-
CATFISH AND BULLHEADS	7,953	4,071	27,945	13,946	650	390
CROAKER, UNCLASSIFIED	18,637	5,437	100	25	400	100
DOLPHIN	1,408	1,020	-	-	-	-
DRUM, RED (REDFISH)	635	352	-	-	300	165
EELS, COMMON	50	50	8,537	7,446	-	-
FLOUNDERS, UNCLASSIFIED	35,902	15,509	47,256	20,555	28,832	12,711
GROUPERS	75,601	64,711	1,000	1,000	369	369
GRUNTS	907	189	-	-	-	-
HICKORY SHAD	345	241	50	38	50	33
KING MACKEREL	10,394	8,122	792	586	4,838	3,628
KING WHITING OR "KINGFISH"	50,299	16,454	69,014	21,639	51,492	15,642
MULLET	681	325	-	-	100	50
SCUP OR PORGY, UNCLASSIFIED	39,563	24,747	2,000	1,700	261	157
SEA BASS, UNCLASSIFIED	8,348	5,144	-	-	-	-
SEA TROUT, GREY	-	-	50	18	1,151	413
SEA TROUT, SPOTTED	1,484	1,291	-	-	3,503	2,908
SHAD	136,338	111,657	76,989	67,666	54,551	46,968
SNAPPER, RED	27,727	57,893	500	1,000	-	-
SNAPPER, VERMILION	4,065	5,448	500	750	50	63
SNAPPER, UNCLASSIFIED	105	131	-	-	-	-
SPANISH MACKEREL	1,460	237	112	46	629	229
SPOT	150	53	-	-	100	36
STURGEON	2,897	1,363	346	134	-	-
TILEFISH	50	25	-	-	-	-
TRIGGERFISH	203	61	-	-	-	-
WARSAW GROUPER	60	30	-	-	-	-
UNCLASSIFIED FOR FOOD	1,943	1,002	311	104	979	667
TOTAL FISH	428,089	325,750	235,502	136,653	148,493	84,613
SHELLFISH						
CRABS, BLUE, HARD	2,736,312	528,517	5,830,849	988,934	2,770,367	466,439
HORSESHOE CRAB	-	-	2,530	380	-	-
SHRIMP, SALTWATER (HEADS-ON)	3,079,661	7,609,955	3,247,242	8,628,492	3,385,565	8,911,196
OYSTERS (MEATS)	1,751	1,594	9,624	9,865	-	-
SCALLOPS, CALICO (MEATS)	-	-	-	-	32,760	45,209
SQUID, UNCL	281	112	-	-	218	77
TOTAL SHELLFISH	5,818,005	8,140,178	9,090,245	9,627,671	6,188,910	9,422,921
GRAND TOTAL	6,246,094	8,465,928	9,325,747	9,764,324	6,337,403	9,507,534

SEE NOTE ON PAGE 8.

GEORGIA LANDINGS, 1978 AND 1979

SPECIES	TOTAL			
	1978		1979	
FISH	POUNDS	DOLLARS	POUNDS	DOLLARS
BLUEFISH	350	92	175	68
CABIO	-	-	168	59
CARP	310	31	780	144
CATFISH AND BULLHEADS	34,671	20,391	36,548	18,407
CROAKER, UNCLASSIFIED	563	159	19,137	5,562
DOLPHIN	1,642	822	1,408	1,020
DRUM, RED (REDFISH)	328	213	935	517
EELS, COMMON	3,551	1,820	8,587	7,496
FLOUNDERS, UNCLASSIFIED	96,130	41,123	111,990	48,775
GROUPERS	139,784	93,703	76,970	66,080
GRUNTS	2,529	551	907	189
HICKORY SHAD	2,079	1,327	445	312
KING MACKEREL	35,120	24,374	16,024	12,336
KING WHITING OR "KINGFISH"	281,731	61,744	170,805	53,735
MULLET	2,447	708	781	375
SCUP OR PORGY, UNCLASSIFIED	78,340	41,093	41,824	26,604
SEA BASS, UNCLASSIFIED	20,771	12,218	8,348	5,144
SEA TROUT, GREY	300	75	1,201	431
SEA TROUT, SPOTTED	2,470	1,513	4,987	4,199
SHAD	237,950	154,805	267,878	226,291
SHARKS, UNCLASSIFIED	55	14	-	-
SNAPPER, MUTTON	50	63	-	-
SNAPPER, RED	99,393	188,993	28,227	58,893
SNAPPER, VERMILION	19,968	30,335	4,615	6,261
SNAPPER, UNCLASSIFIED	8,749	11,606	105	131
SPANISH MACKEREL	211	84	2,201	512
SPOT	300	75	250	89
STURGEON	10,859	2,785	3,243	1,497
SWORDFISH	2,622	5,244	-	-
TILEFISH	220	110	50	25
TRIGGERFISH	1,454	597	203	61
WARSAW GROUPER	-	-	60	30
UNCLASSIFIED FOR FOOD	2,930	1,046	3,233	1,773
TOTAL FISH	1,087,877	697,714	812,085	547,016
SHELLFISH				
CRABS, BLUE, HARD	10,628,294	1,877,446	11,337,528	1,983,890
HORSESHOE CRAB	-	-	2,530	380
SHRIMP, SALTWATER (HEADS-ON)	5,670,757	11,856,875	9,712,468	25,149,643
OYSTERS (MEATS)	20,938	18,792	11,375	11,459
SCALLOPS, CALICO (MEATS)	86,848	117,718	32,760	45,209
SQUID, UNCL	-	-	499	189
TOTAL SHELLFISH	16,406,837	13,870,831	21,097,160	27,190,770
GRAND TOTAL	17,494,714	14,568,545	21,909,245	27,737,786

SEE NOTE ON PAGE 8.

GEORGIA LANDINGS BY MONTHS, 1979

SPECIES	JANUARY		FEBRUARY		MARCH	
FISH	POUNDS	DOLLARS	POUNDS	DOLLARS	POUNDS	DOLLARS
CABIO	-	-	50	15	-	-
CARP	-	-	201	34	352	65
CATFISH AND BULLHEADS	1,200	708	2,184	1,291	100	50
EELS, COMMON	685	514	950	713	1,325	1,060
FLOUNDERS, UNCLASSIFIED	2,592	1,113	1,313	591	928	461
GROUPERS	4,783	4,339	1,939	1,842	4,748	4,581
GRUNTS	212	42	-	-	-	-
HICKORY SHAD	50	38	291	196	104	78
KING MACKEREL	321	257	76	42	-	-
KING WHITING OR "KINGFISH"	9,179	1,941	3,846	962	7,832	2,348
MULLET	150	30	-	-	-	-
SCUP OR PORGY, UNCLASSIFIED	2,945	2,061	5,003	3,752	6,206	3,862
SEA BASS, UNCLASSIFIED	788	525	132	99	398	248
SEA TROUT, SPOTTED	1,680	1,429	-	-	-	-
SHAD	20,489	18,687	105,428	97,788	135,447	106,663
SNAPPER, RED	1,886	4,329	1,975	5,234	8,276	16,340
SNAPPER, VERMILION	114	171	-	-	539	674
STURGEON	-	-	133	33	417	103
WARSAW GROUPER	-	-	-	-	60	30
UNCLASSIFIED FOR FOOD	-	-	1,063	723	263	132
TOTAL FISH	47,074	36,184	124,584	113,315	166,995	136,695
SHELLFISH						
CRABS, BLUE, HARD	58,627	11,894	104,671	21,733	851,950	193,795
SHRIMP, SALTWATER (HEADS-ON)	347,618	799,764	107,936	254,713	14,915	36,035
OYSTERS (MEATS)	2,432	2,213	2,385	2,171	1,788	1,627
SCALLOPS, CALICO (MEATS)	18,568	25,624	14,192	19,585	-	-
TOTAL SHELLFISH	427,245	839,495	229,184	298,202	868,653	231,457
GRAND TOTAL	474,319	875,679	353,768	411,517	1,035,648	368,152

GEORGIA LANDINGS BY MONTHS, 1979 (CONTINUED)

SPECIES	APRIL		MAY		JUNE	
FISH	POUNDS	DOLLARS	POUNDS	DOLLARS	POUNDS	DOLLARS
BLUEFISH	-	-	75	23	-	-
CABIO	-	-	63	16	-	-
CARP	227	45	-	-	-	-
CATFISH AND BULLHEADS	2,186	1,391	374	198	2,524	1,259
DOLPHIN	-	-	616	462	461	334
EELS, COMMON	-	-	50	50	-	-
FLOUNDERS, UNCLASSIFIED	3,184	1,578	8,770	4,311	9,697	3,867
GROUPERS	3,038	3,186	2,283	1,713	7,795	5,981
GRUNTS	-	-	-	-	441	88
KING MACKEREL	2,579	1,934	2,459	1,834	401	293
KING WHITING OR "KINGFISH"	9,604	2,889	18,019	6,243	17,728	4,477
SCUP OR PORGY, UNCLASSIFIED	3,746	3,009	2,832	1,891	5,948	2,682
SEA BASS, UNCLASSIFIED	102	51	137	103	2,675	1,318
SEA TROUT, GREY	101	40	225	79	225	79
SEA TROUT, SPOTTED	423	317	125	94	75	53
SHAD	6,514	3,153	-	-	-	-
SNAPPER, RED	671	1,371	1,664	3,661	1,726	3,412
SNAPPER, VERMILION	550	813	159	199	867	1,219
SPANISH MACKEREL	-	-	465	114	1,332	260
STURGEON	2,693	1,361	-	-	-	-
UNCLASSIFIED FOR FOOD	702	413	193	112	158	55
TOTAL FISH	36,320	21,551	38,509	21,103	52,053	25,377
SHELLFISH						
CRABS, BLUE, HARD	1,112,876	221,453	1,199,465	213,198	1,207,156	195,359
SHRIMP, SALTWATER (HEADS-ON)	200,463	592,277	580,077	1,917,687	486,236	1,431,416
OYSTERS (MEATS)	1,544	1,405	-	-	-	-
SQUID	-	-	168	59	-	-
TOTAL SHELLFISH	1,314,883	815,135	1,779,710	2,130,944	1,693,392	1,626,775
GRAND TOTAL	1,351,203	836,686	1,818,219	2,152,047	1,745,445	1,652,152

SEE NOTE ON PAGE 8.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
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GEORGIA LANDINGS BY MONTHS, 1979 (CONTINUED)

SPECIES	JULY		AUGUST		SEPTEMBER	
FISH	POUNDS	DOLLARS	POUNDS	DOLLARS	POUNDS	DOLLARS
BLUEFISH	100	45	-	-	-	-
CABIO	-	-	-	-	55	28
CATFISH AND BULLHEADS	2,610	1,175	779	365	2,000	1,000
CROAKER, UNCLASSIFIED	-	-	-	-	14,865	4,444
DOLPHIN	247	161	-	-	84	63
DRUM, RED (REDFISH)	100	50	-	-	70	35
FLOUNDERS, UNCLASSIFIED	8,189	3,082	6,285	2,519	12,212	5,165
GROUPERS	730	511	4,374	3,581	6,478	5,764
GRUNTS	54	11	150	38	-	-
KING MACKEREL	632	474	2,476	2,135	941	789
KING WHITING OR "KINGFISH"	19,474	6,179	15,815	4,799	15,688	5,099
MULLET	-	-	100	30	250	188
SCUP OR PORGY, UNCLASSIFIED	3,102	1,552	4,202	2,431	4,001	2,401
SEA BASS, UNCLASSIFIED	962	673	2,057	1,335	286	152
SEA TROUT, GREY	550	193	-	-	-	-
SEA TROUT, SPOTTED	150	100	181	158	156	133
SNAPPER, RED	848	1,772	723	1,458	806	1,629
SNAPPER, VERMILLION	273	410	1,229	1,536	349	436
SNAPPER, UNCLASSIFIED	-	-	105	131	-	-
SPANISH MACKEREL	204	72	-	-	-	-
SPOT	50	18	-	-	-	-
TILEFISH	50	25	-	-	-	-
TRIGGERFISH	-	-	103	21	-	-
UNCLASSIFIED FOR FOOD	142	80	212	85	185	56
TOTAL FISH	38,467	16,583	38,791	20,622	58,426	27,382
SHELLFISH						
CRABS, BLUE, HARD	1,403,258	228,752	1,537,002	247,088	1,410,898	228,149
SHRIMP, SALTWATER (HEADS-ON)	906,118	2,188,495	861,886	1,519,358	1,832,001	4,697,227
SQUID	50	18	281	112	-	-
TOTAL SHELLFISH	2,309,426	2,417,265	2,399,169	1,766,558	3,242,899	4,925,376
GRAND TOTAL	2,348,893	2,433,848	2,437,960	1,787,180	3,301,325	4,952,758

GEORGIA LANDINGS BY MONTHS, 1979 (CONTINUED)

SPECIES	OCTOBER		NOVEMBER		DECEMBER	
FISH	POUNDS	DOLLARS	POUNDS	DOLLARS	POUNDS	DOLLARS
CATFISH AND BULLHEADS	5,247	2,379	7,074	3,496	10,270	5,095
CROAKER, UNCLASSIFIED	4,272	1,118	-	-	-	-
DRUM, RED (REDFISH)	337	201	118	66	310	165
EELS, COMMON	150	128	3,790	3,640	1,637	1,391
FLOUNDERS, UNCLASSIFIED	27,705	12,298	21,061	9,481	10,056	4,309
GROUPERS	20,287	18,253	19,518	15,629	997	700
GRUNTS	50	10	-	-	-	-
KING MACKEREL	3,063	2,747	3,076	1,831	-	-
KING WHITING OR "KINGFISH"	17,770	6,207	22,744	8,512	12,906	4,079
MULLET	281	127	-	-	-	-
SCUP OR PORGY, UNCLASSIFIED	935	655	2,281	1,825	623	483
SEA BASS, UNCLASSIFIED	449	372	273	223	89	45
SEA TROUT, GREY	-	-	100	40	-	-
SEA TROUT, SPOTTED	880	782	308	265	1,009	868
SNAPPER, RED	5,597	12,043	3,236	6,779	419	865
SNAPPER, VERMILLION	167	251	-	-	368	552
SPANISH MACKEREL	200	66	-	-	-	-
SPOT	-	-	-	-	200	71
TRIGGERFISH	-	-	100	40	-	-
UNCLASSIFIED FOR FOOD	-	-	201	60	114	57
TOTAL FISH	87,790	57,637	83,880	51,887	38,996	18,880
SHELLFISH						
CRABS, BLUE, HARD	1,576,669	268,934	719,454	124,574	155,502	28,961
HORSESHOE CRAB	-	-	1,330	200	1,200	180
SHRIMP, SALTWATER (HEADS-ON)	2,072,101	5,969,523	1,229,916	3,253,641	1,073,201	2,489,507
OYSTERS (MEATS)	-	-	207	238	3,019	3,805
TOTAL SHELLFISH	3,648,770	6,238,457	1,950,907	3,378,653	1,232,922	2,522,453
GRAND TOTAL	3,736,560	6,296,094	2,033,787	3,430,540	1,271,918	2,541,133

NOTE:--DATA MAY INCLUDE REVISIONS SINCE PUBLICATION OF MONTHLY BULLETINS. OYSTERS AND CLAMS ARE REPORTED IN POUNDS OF MEATS. ALL OTHER SPECIES ARE SHOWN IN ROUND WEIGHT.